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East Timor Action Network / U.S.

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Fax Transmittal Sheet

To: José Ramos-Horta c/o CDPM

From: Charles Scheiner Date: 5/27/92 Pages (incl. this): 5

Thanks for Xanana's letter. I hope the attached parts this item to be of

Charles

27-05-1992 07:53 DE P/ C.I.D.A.C. PAG.01

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(I don't have a translation for the next one, from a Timorese living in New Zealand:)

>From A.Maia@massey.ac.nz Thu May 21 22:39:38 1992

Subject: Comentario a entrevista com JRHorta

Tenho a impressao que todo o pessoal que teve a oportunidade de ler a passagem da entrevista com JRHorta ha dias nesta rede ficou de qualquer forma (se nao profundamente) chocado com as suas afirmacoes, principalmente no tocante ao papel de Portugal em relacao ao problema de Timor (pondo de lado todos os f... e outros do genero). Foi como se fosse um balde de agua fria apos tanta discussao e campanha pela causa.
Pondo de lado qualquer reaccao emocional e julgando as coisas `a luz da razao, talvez seja oportuno considerarmos os seguinter pontos:

1. nao sei bem em que contexto e para que objectivo JRHorta foi entrevistado, mas da-me a entender que nao foi algo de caracter oficial, embora ele tenha autorizado a sua transcricao nesta rede (o que justifica ate certo ponto a linguagem ordinaria que usou);
2. JRHorta esteve envolvido na politica de Timor no foro internacional desde o inicio e nao ha duvida nenhuma que ele esta muito bem a par da evolucao politica dos governantes portugueses em relacao a Timor durante toda esta temporada (os equivocos e paralisias); dai talvez as frustacoes e pressoes psicologicas (o que nao implica que possa abusa-los);
3. com JRHorta ou sem JRHorta o povo de Timor continua a sofrer e lutar pelo seus legitimos direitos ate o fim, e nao vejo necessidade nenhuma de afrouxar o apoio so por causa duma afirmacao dele; alias, como muito bem disse o Jose Antonio no seu comentario, que "mais vale ignorar... e continuar a fazer o possivel por Timor", como tambem a Ana Paula Barros.
4. pondo de lado o tal "love/hate relationship", mais do que nunca e tempo de as duas partes se sentarem para uma orquestrada accao pela causa; e sem duvida nenhuma, com o nosso apoio tambem. --

rmindo Maia
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East Timor Action Network - U.S.

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May 26, 1992

Dear José Antonio Basto and Ana Paula Barros –

I'm writing on behalf of the East Timor Action Network/U.S., and myself personally, to try to apologize for and undo some of the bad feelings that were generated by the inappropriate circulation of some of José Ramos-Horta's ill-considered comments in his interview with Lorne Rider, posted on pt-net. I have read your comments (in translation), and fully understand the justified anger which you feel towards José Ramos-Horta.

I only ask that you try to understand that this situation results from a variety of screw-ups, and that you can work past it to continue the good and vital work that the two of you, many other Portuguese people, and others in the U.S. and around the world are doing for the people of East Timor. And, I hope, that you can forgive Lorne and José and work alongside them in the future.

Following this note from me, there is a fax I received last Friday from José Ramos-Horta in Lisbon, where I had faxed him your two comments. He was very upset, and responded immediately. This morning, I received another fax from him, with a personal letter for the two of you. Since it is handwritten in Portuguese, I will not try to retype it for email, but will mail it to you on paper. Ana, I don't have your address.

After José's note here, there is one from Lorne Rider, who now realizes that he should not have posted José's off-the-cuff comments. Lorne, who went on the Peace Boat in February, graduated from Brown University this past weekend, while dealing with his remorse over his part in this interview.

Finally, I hope you will read one of the speeches José Ramos-Horta gave at the European Parliament on April 23 or at the Council on Foreign Relations in New York on May 14. These, I think, show a better measure of the man than his interview. I will mail the CFR speech to you on paper, so as not to clutter your email with a long article. I believe both have already been circulated electronically, and would be glad to email them if you wish. Lorne also mentioned José's comments at a public meeting in New York City on May 12. While I do not have a transcript of that meeting, I do have a videotape, and could get copies made and sent to either of you, if you would like to see it.

I am sending this to you by email, and to a few others who have been involved in this discussion (Lorne Rider, John MacDougall, Nancy Lutz, Armindo Maia, Arnold Kohen, and José Ramos-Horta), but I am not posting it on soc.culture.portugal, pt-net, or any other conferences or mailing lists. I think it is best if the controversy is allowed to die down of its own accord. However, if either of you feels that this letter or attached articles should be posted or emailed to

others you know of who were upset by the interview, please feel free to do so. I only ask that you not except parts of it out of context.

Jose, I know you and your deep commitment and hard work for East Timor. I hope you are not so turned-off by this episode that you cannot continue that work. I'm sorry you were unable to get to our May 12 program or May 16 meeting, and I hope you will be able to make the next one, on June 28. I'll send you a notice.

Ana, we haven't met but I've been in touch with Jose Magalhaes and know of the good work being done by yourself and others at the University of Washington. I can empathize with Timor being ever-present in your high school and college days, and with the fervent hope that things will soon be better for the people there. I appreciate your work for East Timor in the past, and hope it will continue in the future.

If either of you has anything you would like to say to Jose Ramos-Horta directly, you can fax him care of the CDPM is Lisbon, fax +351/1-534-009. If you want to discuss this further with me, my telephone number is (914)428-7299 and my fax is (914)428-7383.

As a U.S. citizen – from a country whose military massacred more Iraqis in six weeks last year than Indonesia has killed East Timorese in 17 years of occupation – I feel especially sad that the Portuguese people and those in their government who stand for justice were insulted by this episode. There are very few examples in this world of governments acting in the interests of oppressed peoples, and Portugal in East Timor (at least since 1974) is one of the best. Although we all wish each of us could do more, from my perspective Portugal has done far more for the East Timorese than any other Western country. I hope it can continue and expand.

I look forward to working with both of you for human rights, peace, and self-determination for the much-tortured people of East Timor.

For Peace with Justice,

Charles Scheiner
Coordinator, East Timor Action Network / U.S.

Lisbon
22 May 1992

I was shocked by Lorne's decision in running our talk without clearing with me first! I had asked him to do so and he had agreed! In any case, it does not excuse my use of certain language. My sincere apologies to everyone. It was <u>not</u> my intention to offend the Portuguese people as such. I referred to Portuguese bureaucrats. I have the deepest affection for the Portuguese people. In December

I cried on TV over the demonstration of friendship shown by the Portuguese people. They are wonderful. Even some diplomats are really very, very caring people. Please accept my apologies. To Ana Paula and José Antonio, I hope to meet you some day in person to apologize and explain things.

Please send on my comments to everyone. I'm sincerely distressed that I hurt the feelings of the Portuguese., Please do not confuse the Portuguese people with some bureaucrats and politicians!

– José Ramos-Horta

Providence, RI USA
May 23, 1992

I apologize for my insensitivity in posting the interview with Mr. Ramos-Horta without his full clearance. It was inexcusable and demonstrates my lack of appreciation of the extent of the circulation of electronic mail networks.

In any case, I would like to emphasize that Mr. Ramos-Horta's comments were made out of frustration at some Portuguese diplomats for having missed, or mis-handled, an opportunity for action which may never come again. Only by hearing his voice, not reading a transcript, can one appreciate the full emotion of his words. I only ask those who were offended to appreciate the feelings of frustration and betrayal East Timorese people must feel after sixteen years of struggle against all odds. I also ask the Portuguese people who have been fighting for the cause of the East Timorese for a long time to understand that they must differentiate themselves from government functionaries. I believe that the better we all understand the sometimes less-than-altruistic actions of our own governments, the better we are able to criticize our own governments' policies, the better we will be as human beings to work for a just and peaceful world.

Also, in response to Ana Paula, I believe Mr. Ramos-Horta would not have made any of the comments made more-or-less privately in this personal interview on Nightline or in any other public forum. These were statements made to someone seeking to appreciate the finer details of the East Timorese resistance struggle, not to someone who has never heard of East Timor or who is not aware that 200,000 people have died since the Indonesian invasion. Even the statements he made at the public forum in NYC to an audience who was generally familiar with the situation in East Timor were of a vastly different character. I hope a reading of the transcript of his remarks there will change your opinion. Please do not act on first impressions when taken out of context.

Again, I must apologize for the controversy this has generated. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Lorne Rider
ST701831@BROWNVM.BROWN.EDU